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ABSTRACT

To continue the monitoring of reading attitude development begun in an earlier study of 234 children in grades one through six, a second reading attitude inventory was administered in the same school district to 216 primary students and 293 intermediate students. Of particular significance to this study was a change in the basal reading series used by the school district. Among the findings are the following: (1) no significant differences were observed in attitude changes in the primary grades, while a significant difference was observed in attitude changes in the intermediate grades; (2) a significant difference was observed between sexes, with males having more positive attitude scores than females in both primary and intermediate grades; (3) no sex by grade interaction was observed in the primary grades; boys reported more positive scores in all grades; and (4) a significant sex by grade interaction was observed in the intermediate grades--boys reported more positive scores in grades 4 and 5, but less positive scores in grade 6. (The paper concludes with a comparison of the first year study with the results of this study.) (HOD)

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The Second Year of an Examination of Attitude Development Toward Reading in Grades One Through Six

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University of Wyoming

In a recent study (Parker and Paradis, 1983), two hundred and thirty-four children in grades one through six were administered a reading attitude inventory to ascertain if attitudes changed as boys and girls progressed through the grades. Results indicated no attitude changes from grades one through three nor between grades five and six. A difference was found between grades four and five which appeared attributable to a more positive attitude toward non-classroom type reading in grade five. Sex differences approaching statistical significance favored girls, however, no interactions between sex and grade level were reported.

The purpose of this study was to continue monitoring reading attitude development for a second year. Of particular significance to this study was a change in the basal reading series used by the school district. All classrooms in the district switched from one major basal series to another produced by a different publisher.

In order to compare the results from the two studies, a similar research method was employed as well as asking answers to the same questions:

1. Do attitudes change as children progress from grade one through grade three and from grade four through grade six?
2. Do attitudes differ between boys and girls in the primary grades or boys and girls in the intermediate grades?

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3. Do sex by grade interactions occur for reading attitudes in the primary or intermediate grades?

Method

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of children from seven elementary schools in a rural community of 25,000 located in the Rocky Mountain region. The sample was determined by randomly selecting four classes at each grade level to participate in the study. A total of 216 primary grade and 293 intermediate grade children were measured.

The sample size was a major difference between the first year study (FYS) and the second year study (SYS). In the FYS, subjects were randomly selected from each classroom reather than including all children from a classroom in the sample. Thus, the FYS included 114 primary grade children while the SYS had 216. The FYS included 120 intermediate grade children while the SYS had 293.

Measures

Reading attitudes were determined using the Heathington Primary Scale for grades 1-3 and the Heathington Intermediate Scale for grades 4-5 (Heathington, 1975; Alexander and Filler, 1976). A Likert-type scale with five categories of response was used in both instruments. Development for the scales began with individual interviews of 60 children in grades 1-6 to gain initial statements for the measures. Statements from the interviews indicated a need to provide two scales, one for the primary grades and one for the intermediate grades. An item analysis was used to eliminate nondiscriminating statements resulting in a final Primary Scale of 20 items and a final Intermediate Scale of 24 items.

Reliability for the scales was established using a test-retest method. For the primary grades r = .73; for the intermediate grades r = .87.

Alexander (1983) recommended for teachers using the Heathington Scales that scores on the Primary Scale of 80 or above be considered as representing positive responses while scores 40 or below represented negative responses. Scores on the Intermediate Scale of 96 or above were considered to represent positive responses while scores 48 or below represented negative responses. Scores between the positive and negative points represented a neutral range which indicate mixed feelings. The empirical basis for these recommended interpretations was not reported.

Procedure

All measures were administered by an investigator during the third week of May. Each class was measured as a group with the investigator reading each item before the children marked a response. Administration time was approximately 10 to 15 minutes in both primary and intermediate grades.

A 2 x 3, sex by grade level, factorial ANOVA was employed to analyze data. Post hoc comparisons was conducted using Tukey's test for Honestly Significant Differences.

Results

No significant differences were observed for attitude scores in grades 1, 2, and 3. Table I reports relevant data.

A significant difference was observed for attitude scores in grades 4, 5, and 6. A post hoc comparison using Tukey's HSD revealed a significant

difference between grade 4 and grade 5, and between grade 4 and grade 6. No difference was found between grade 5 and 6. Table II reports relevant data.

A significant difference was observed between sex with males having more positive attitude scores than females in both the primary and intermediate grades. Tables III and IV report relevant data.

No sex by grade interaction was observed in the primary grades. Boys reported more positive scores in all grades. Table V reports relevant data.

A significant sex by grade interaction was observed in the intermediate grades. Boys reported more positive scores in grades 4 and 5, but less positive scores in grade 6. Table VI reports relevant data.

Discussion

The focus of the discussion will be a comparison of the first year study (FYS) conducted by Parker and Paradis (1983) with the results from this, the second year study (SYS).

Both the FYS and the SYS indicated children in grades 1, 2, and 3 possessed positive attitudes toward reading. While the children did not reach Alexander's (1983) criterion score for positive attitudes of 80 or above, each grade level from both the FYS and the SYS reported scores in the high 70's. Thus, the primary grade children demonstrated positive attitudes during the two years of the data collection.

Scores from children in grades 4, 5, and 6 for the FYS and the SYS presented a conundrum. The FYS reported a steady increase in positive attitudes from grade 4 to grade 5 with continued growth in grade 6. In contrast, the SYS reported a very positive attitude in grade 4 with a substantial decrease in grade 5 followed by a continued decline in grade 6.

The dramatic differences in the FYS and SYS appear attributable to one of three factors or a combination of the factors. One factor could have been the change in basal systems within the classrooms. The new basal may have appealed to one grade level to a greater extent than another. A second factor could have been the mid-May date for administering the attitude scale. With school ending in two weeks, children's responses may have been less reliable for a Likert-type scale. A third factor could have been the reliability of the attitude scale, however, as indicated earlier, test-retest reliability coefficients were appropirate for this type of instrument.

Attitudes related to sex of subjects in both the primary and the intermediate grades reversed positions. In the FYS, girls indicated more positive attitudes while in the SYS boys reported more positive attitudes. This change of positions would seem attributable to the switch in basal series or one of the other factors previously discussed, but must be considered cautiously. The attitudes of both sexes were very positive. Thus, while the differences were statistically significant, they may not have been of an educational significance.

The reading attitude scores for boys and girls in grades 4, 5, and 6 from the FYS and SYS revealed different patterns. The FYS indicated girls possessed more positive attitudes throughout the grades. The SYS indicated boys with more positive attitudes in grades 4 and 5, but higher attitude scores were reported for girls in grade 6. Once again, the influence for the change in scores would seem attributable to either the new basal reading series or one of the measurement factors.

References

Alexander, J.E. (Ed.). (1983) Teaching Reading (2nd ed.). Boston: Little, Brown and Company

Alexander, J.E., & Filler, R.C. (1976) Attitudes and Reading. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Heathington, D.S. (1975) The development of scales to measure attitudes toward reading. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee.

Parker, A., & Paradis, E. (1983) An examination of attitude development toward reading in grades one through six. Paper presented at the Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association, Jackson, Wyoming.

First Year Study

TABLE I A

PRIMARY GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE SCORE BY GRADE

	1	2	3
$\bar{X}$	77.30	80.95	77.27
S.D.	11.45	11.07	10.45
N	37	37	40

$p = .088$

$F(2, 108) = 2.238$

FIGURE 1 A

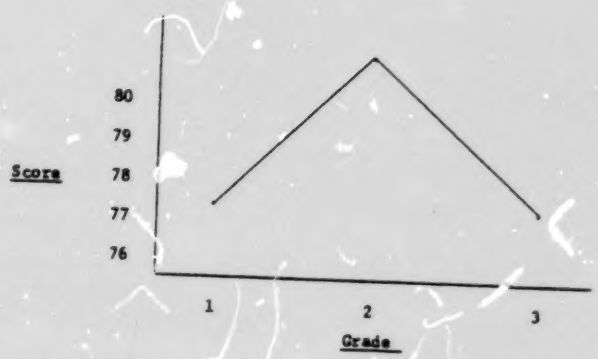


TABLE II A

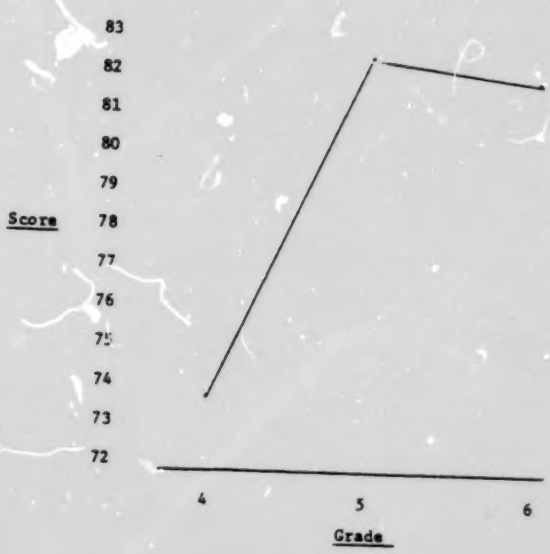
INTERMEDIATE GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE SCORES BY GRADE

	4	5	6
$\bar{X}$	73.87	83.12	81.75
S.D.	16.54	16.91	19.11
N	40	40	40

$p < .05$

$F(2, 114) = 3.497$

FIGURE 2 A



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First Year Study

TABLE III A

PRIMARY GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE SCORES BY SEX

	Male	Female
$\bar{X}$	76.71	80.58
S.D.	9.75	12.13
N	62	52

p = .052
F (1,108) = 3.845

FIGURE 3 A

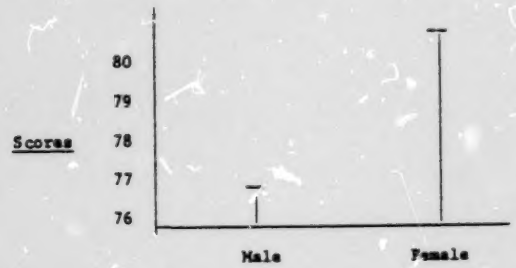


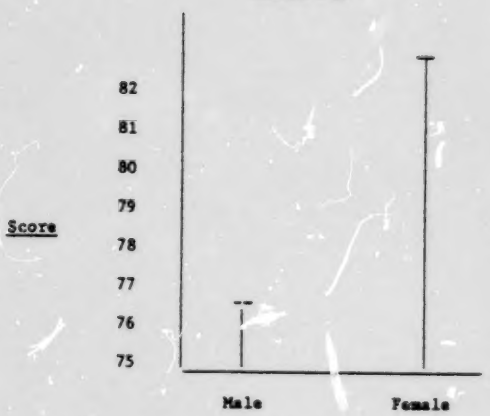
TABLE IV A

INTERMEDIATE GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE BY SEX

	Male	Female
$\bar{X}$	76.57	82.68
S.D.	16.95	18.43
N	61	59

p = .051
F (1,114) = 3.877

FIGURE 4 A



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First Year Study

TABLE V A

PRIMARY GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE SCORE OF SEX BY GRADE

	1		2		3	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
$\bar{X}$	75.42	79.28	77.29	85.75	77 27	77.28
S.D.	9.20	13.42	10.83	9.73	9.48	11.82
N	19	18	21	16	22	18

p = .239

F (2, 108) = 1.452

FIGURE 5 A

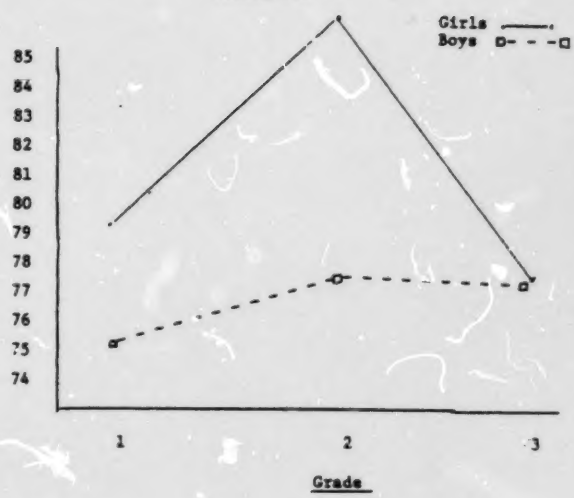


TABLE VI A

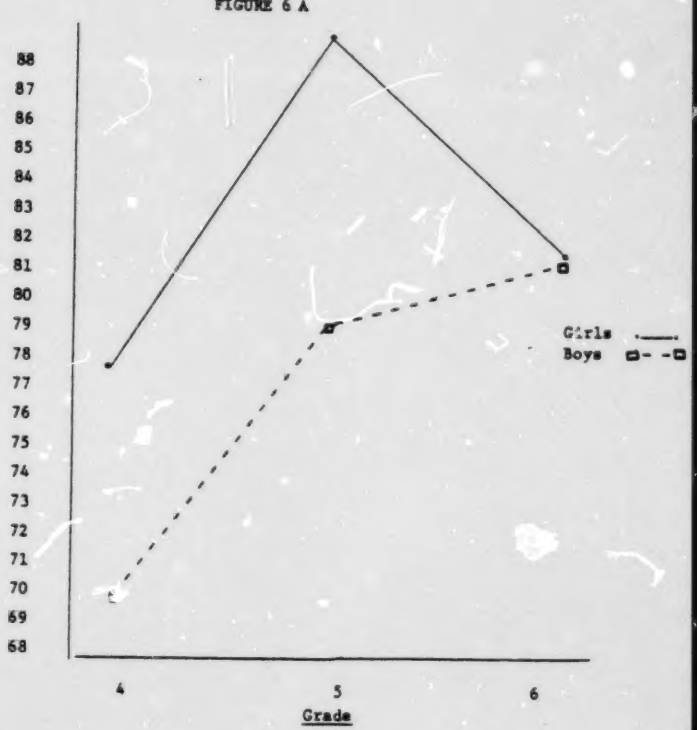
INTERMEDIATE GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE SCORE OF SEX BY GRADE

	4		5		6	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
$\bar{X}$	69.85	77.90	78.18	88.58	81.60	81.90
S.D.	16.56	15.91	13.94	18.55	18.73	19.97
N	20	20	21	19	20	20

p = .40

F (2, 114) = .925

FIGURE 6 A



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Second Year Study

TABLE I

PRIMARY GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE SCORE BY GRADE

	1	2	3
$\bar{X}$	76.083	77.985	78.130
S.D.	8.502	11.540	11.975
N	82	65	69

$p = .4170$

$F\ (2,210) = .8784$

FIGURE 1

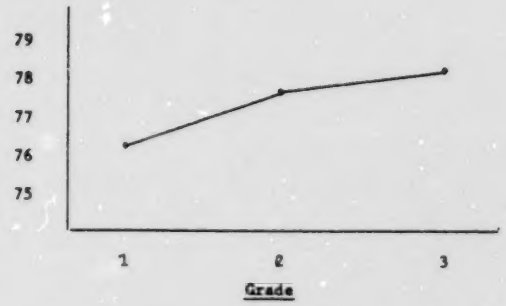


TABLE II

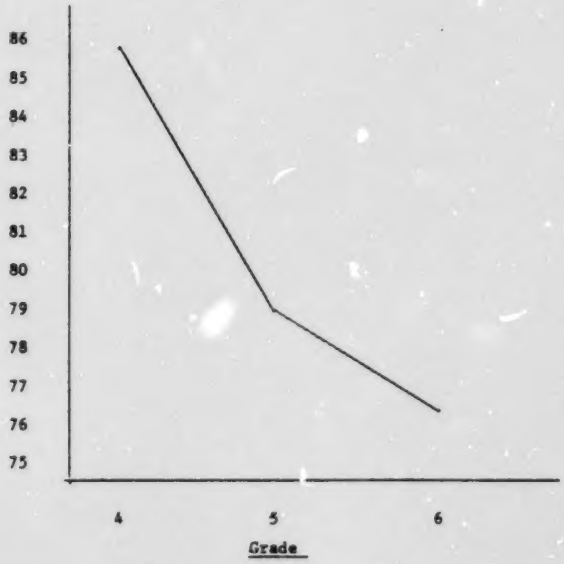
INTERMEDIATE GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE SCORES BY GRADE

	4	5	6
$\bar{X}$	85.761	78.122	76.291
S.D.	14.505	16.760	15.843
N	117	90	86

$p < .01$

$F\ (2,287) = 10.7924$

FIGURE 2



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Second Year Study

TABLE III

PRIMARY GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE SCORES BY SEX

	Male	Female
$\bar{X}$	79.449	75.211
S.D.	9.165	11.569
N	107	109

$p < .01$

$F\ (1,210) = 8.883$

FIGURE 3

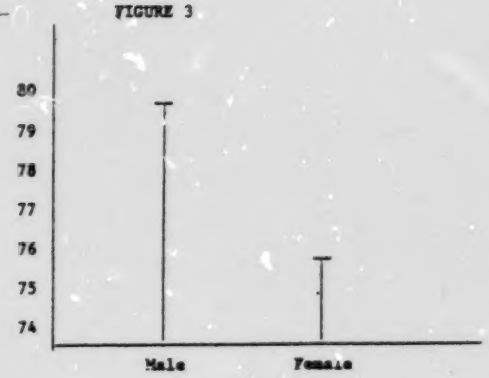


TABLE IV

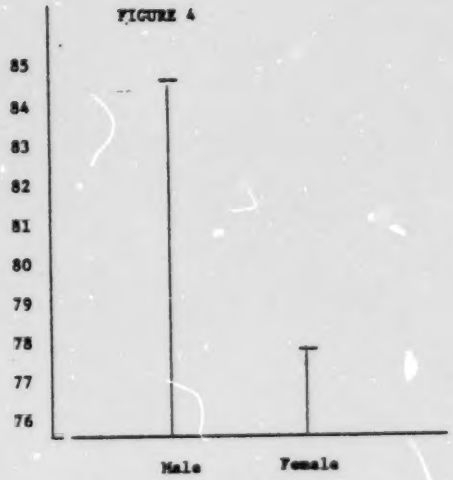
INTERMEDIATE GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE BY SEX

	Male	Female
X	84.286	77.294
S.D.	16.364	15.220
N	140	153

$p < .01$

$F\ (1,287) = 14.357$

FIGURE 4



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Second Year Study

TABLE V

PRIMARY GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE SCORE OF SEX BY GRADE

	1		2		3	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
$\bar{X}$	76.718	76.512	80.643	75.973	81.275	73.793
S.D.	7.619	9.282	9.142	12.822	10.099	13.138
N	39	43	28	37	40	29

p = .186

F (2, 210) = 1.963

FIGURE 5

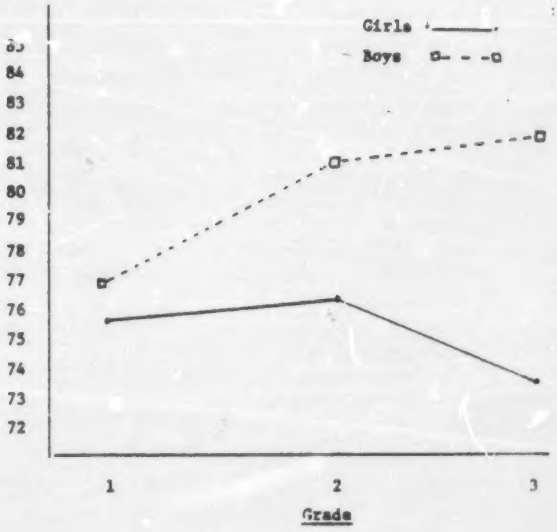


TABLE VI

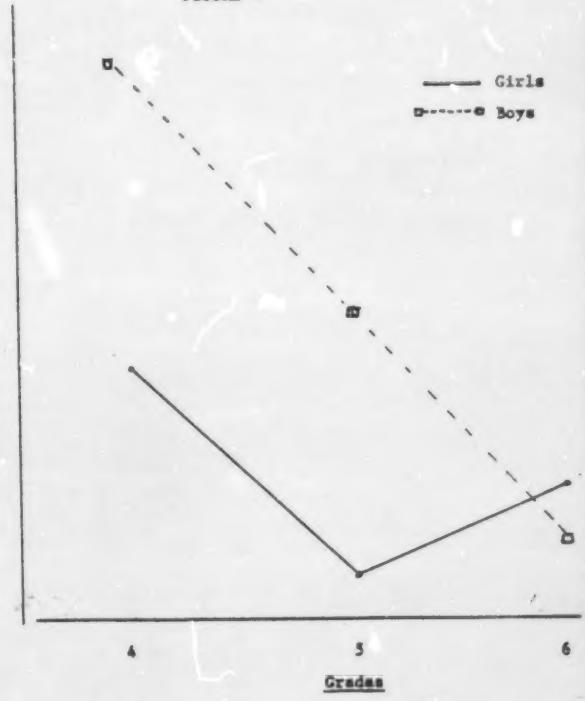
INTERMEDIATE GRADE MEAN ATTITUDE SCORE OF SEX BY GRADE

	4		5		6	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
$\bar{X}$	91.158	80.633	83.047	73.617	75.825	76.696
S.D.	12.515	14.496	17.004	15.364	16.553	15.371
N	57	60	43	37	30	46

p = .02

F (2, 287) = 3.987

FIGURE 6



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